

MONSTER MARÍA



MARISOL Y EL HURACÁN MARÍA

Pamela L. Laskin & Lyn Di Iorio

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To the children of Puerto Rico



Para Los Niños de Puerto Rico

MONSTER MARÍA

MARISOL Y EL HURACÁN MARÍA



Marisol lived with her Abuelito and her parrots in a casita by the sea. There was good food on the stove and a warm bed.

“Buenos Días, Marco and Rosa,” Marisol sang out to her parrots everyday when she woke up.

After school, Marisol and Abuelito would spend the afternoon reading in their garden. Marisol loved playing school and would teach Abuelito English words from her books.

Abuelito was always her favorite student.



En una linda casita frente al mar, vivía Marisol junto a su abuelito y sus cotorras. Había comida bien rica en la estufa y una cama calientita.

“Buenos días, Marco y Rosa,” Marisol decía con dulzura todas las mañanas a sus cotorras.

Después de la escuela, Marisol y Abuelito solían pasar la tarde leyendo en el jardín. A Marisol le encantaba jugar a la escolita y enseñarle palabras nuevas en inglés a Abuelito.

Él siempre fue su estudiante preferido.



One morning, while Abuelito was checking on the garden and Marisol was getting ready for school, Monster Maria arrived and ripped the roof off of their home.

All Marisol saw was sky and rain. The wind howled and water filled the streets, rising higher and higher.

A familiar voice cried out from the distance:

“Swim, Marisol, swim.”

“But my legs are too short and my arms are too small,” she cried.



Una mañana, cuando Abuelito estaba dando una vuelta por el jardín y Marisol se estaba preparando para ir a la escuela, llegó el huracán María y arrancó el techo de la casa.

Marisol vió solo cielo y lluvia. El viento aullaba y las calles se inundaban más y más.

Una voz conocida resonaba en la distancia:

¡

“Nada, Marisol, nada!”

“Pero mis piernas son tan cortitas y mis brazos demasiados chiquitos,” ella gritó.



The swirling wind laughed. Marisol grabbed the necklace her mother had left her when she died as she ran outside and swam through flooded streets filled with weeds and swarming insects. Her Abuelito was nowhere to be found. Marisol cried as she swam, the currents pulling her into their darkness. The homes around were broken and splintered.

“Give up,” Monster Maria’s voice shrieked in the wind. “Where do you think you are going?”

“I am going to find Abuelito.”

Marisol looked up in the clouds and saw her Mami, Luz. “Swim, Marisol, swim. You must keep going,” Mami sang softly in Marisol’s ears.



El viento arremolinado se rió. Marisol sujetó el collar que su madre le dejó al morir, corrió hacia afuera y nadó entre las calles inundadas con algas y enjambres de insectos. Su abuelito no se encontraba por ningún lado.

Marisol lloraba mientras nadaba. Las corrientes la estaban empujando hacia la oscuridad. Las casas a su alrededor estaban destruidas y derribadas.

“¡Ríndete!” tronaba en el viento la voz de la tormenta María. “¿A dónde crees que vas?”
“Voy a encontrar a mi abuelito.”

Marisol miró al cielo y vió a su mami, Luz.

“¡Nada, Marisol, nada. Debes seguir moviéndote!” Mami susurraba suavemente en los oídos de Marisol.



The stone on her necklace lit up the darkened river. She followed the light, swimming all day and night.

On the second day, the rain had subsided. But the lightning was angry, and so were the waves. Monster María destroyed everything in her path and screamed at Marisol as she swam. Marisol heard the cries of children calling out for food and water. How could she help them, help Borinquén, her beloved Puerto Rico?

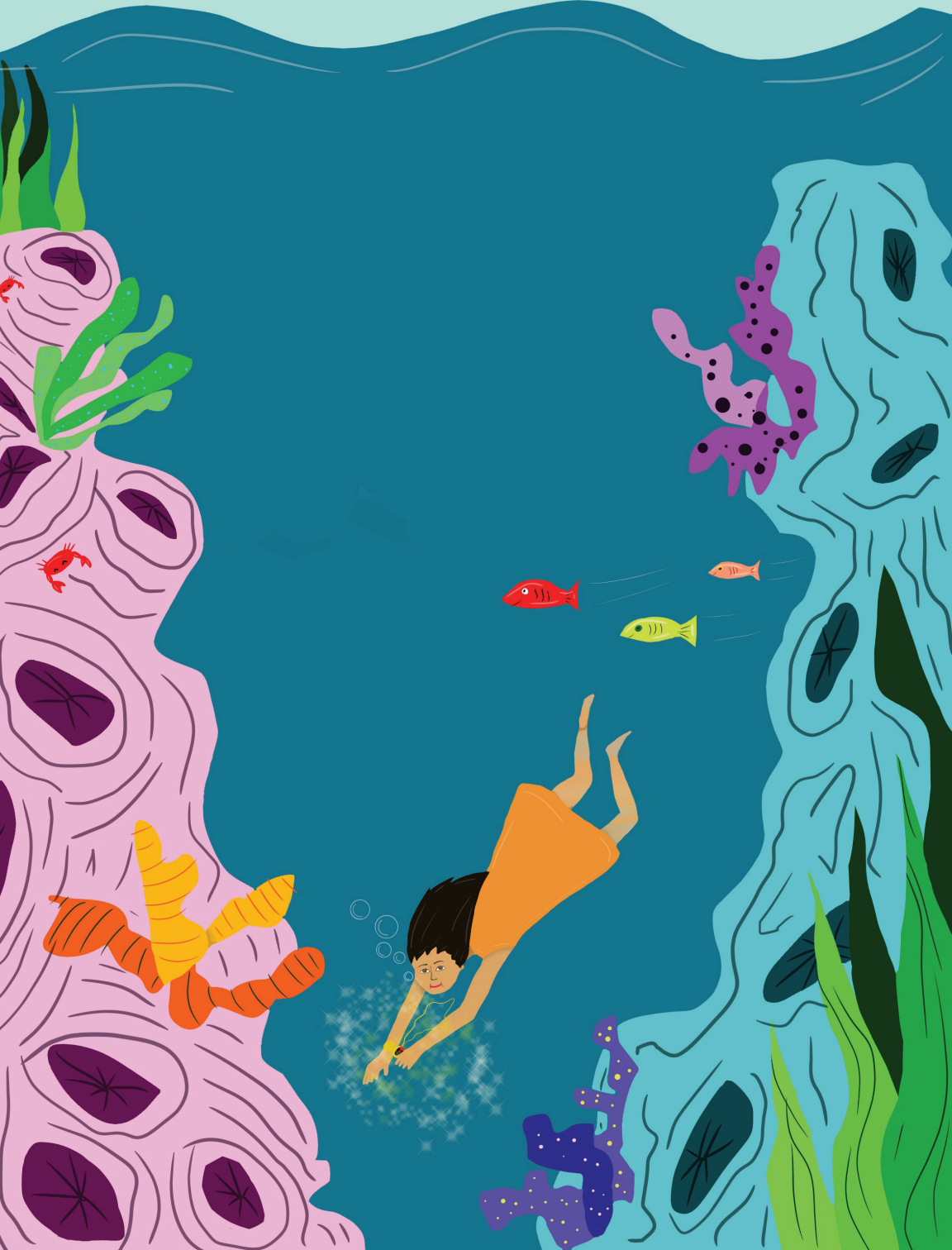
She was just a little girl, and she missed her Abuelito. She missed the smell of arroz con pollo and fried plantains cooking on the stove. She missed the sound of Abuelito playing his cuatro, and reading him books at night. She wondered if Marco and Rosa were okay.



La piedra de su collar iluminó el río oscurecido. Marisol siguió la luz. Ella nadó día y noche.

Al segundo día, la lluvia había disminuído. Pero los rayos y las olas seguían hambrientos. La tormenta deshizo todo a su paso y le gritaba a Marisol mientras ella nadaba.

Marisol escuchaba los sollozos de los niños pidiendo agua y comida. Cómo podría ayudarlos? Cómo podría ayudar a Borinquén, su querido Puerto Rico? Ella no era más que una niñita que echaba de menos a su abuelito. Marisol extrañaba el olor de tostones y arroz con pollo en la hornilla. Ella extrañaba a su abuelito tocando el cuatro y leyéndole cuentos por la noche. Y se preguntaba si Marcos y Rosa estarían bien.



As the sun rose on the third day, there was Mami swimming beside her. She reached out and touched Marisol's necklace, and then she disappeared. "Swim, Marisol, swim. Use your compass."

Marisol followed the necklace's light through the rain into the deepest part of the water. "There is so much water. What should I do?"

"Just keep going," whispered Mami. "My brave girl. You have to keep swimming!"

Marisol opened her pendant. Inside was a picture of Mami's beautiful face, smiling. "Swim to the shore and el sol will meet you."



Al tercer día, el sol salió y Marisol vió a Mami nadando a su lado. Mami se acercó, y tocó el collar de Marisol. "¡Nada, Marisol, nada! Usa tu brújula." Y con eso Mami desapareció entre las olas.

Marisol siguió la luz del collar a través de la lluvia en las partes más profundas de las aguas. "Hay tanta y tanta agua. ¿Qué hago ahora?"

"Continua, hija, persiste," susurraba Mami. "Mi nena corajuda. Tienes que seguir nadando."

Marisol abrió su pendiente. Dentro había una imagen preciosa de Mami sonriendo. "Nada a la orilla y el sol te encontrará."



Marisol looked up in the sky and saw a glint of sun peeking through the clouds. Monster María was moving further and further away, and Marisol found herself on firm, wet ground.

She was alone.

So many homes were gone. She looked around at the mountainous piles of broken furniture, toppled telephone poles, piles of clothes, uprooted trees, and water-stained photos.

But standing amidst the rubble were her people.

Their clothes were ragged, but their smiles were huge, and they welcomed Marisol with open arms.



Marisol miró al cielo, y vió un rayito de sol asomarse entre las nubes. La tormenta se estaba yendo más y más lejos. Y Marisol se encontró a sí misma en la orilla de arena mojada pero firme.

Muchas casas ya no estaban. Miró alrededor y vió montones de ropa y muebles rotos, postes de teléfono derribados, árboles desarraigados y fotografías arruinadas por el agua.

Pero en el medio de todo aquello se encontraban su gente.

Sus ropas estaban medias tiradas, pero sus sonrisas brillaban. Y con sus brazos abiertos, todos ellos les dieron bendiciones y bienvenidas a Marisol.



She looked through the crowd and found the face she was looking for: her Abuelito. And there were Marcos and Rosa, perched on his shoulders.

“Oh, Abuelito. I was scared I lost you.” Marisol hugged him with all her strength.

Abuelito held her close.

“I thought I had lost you too, mija. But we have each other and our friends and neighbors. Now it’s time for us to rebuild together.”



Ella miró a toda esa gente y encontró la cara que estaba buscando: la de su abuelito. Y Marcos y Rosa también estaban ahí, posados en los hombros de Abuelito.

“¡Ay, Abuelito! Tenía miedo de haberte perdido.” Marisol le dió un apretón bien fuerte.

Abuelito la abrazó más fuerte todavía. “Creí haberte perdido, mi princesa. Pero mira todo lo que tenemos: el uno al otro, a nuestros amigos y a todo este vecindario. Ahora llegó el momento, todos juntos y con mucha fe y esfuerzo, de reconstruir a nuestra islita querida.”

THE END



FIN

ABOUT THIS BOOK'S CREATORS

Lyn Di Iorio is a fiction writer and scholar. Her novella *Outside the Bones* (Arte Público Press) won Foreword Review's Indies Silver Book-of-the-Year award, was a top-five finalist for the 2012 John Gardner Fiction Prize, placed her on Latinostories.com Top Ten New Latinx Writers to Watch and Read list, and was a finalist for the International Latino Book Award. An early excerpt from her novel-in-progress *The Sound of Falling Darkness* was shortlisted for The Pirates Alley Faulkner Society's 201 Novel-in-Progress award. Her most recent short stories were published in *Review: Literature and Arts of the Americas* (Routledge, 2017 and 2014) and are part of a work-in-progress, *Hurricanes and Other Stories*, some of which are about the effects of Hurricane Maria on Puerto Rico. Her *Hurricanes* stories project is the focus of her work in the CUNY Advanced Research Collaborative and also won her a CUNY Office of Research Book Completion award in 2018. Her scholarly works include a book on Latinx identity called *Killing Spanish: Literary Essays on Ambivalent U.S. Latino Identity* (Palgrave Macmillan) and two coedited books of essays on Latinx literary criticism and magical realism (also with Palgrave Macmillan). She is half-Puerto Rican, grew up on the island, and studied at Harvard, Stanford, and the University of California at Berkeley. She teaches literature and creative writing at City College and CUNY Graduate Center.

Pamela L. Laskin is a lecturer in the English Department at City College, where she directs the Poetry Outreach Center. Several of her children's and poetry books have been published, and *RONIT AND JAMIL, A Palestinian/Israeli ROMEO AND JULIET* in verse was published by Harper Collins in 2017, and was named among the 34 books to have on your radar for 2017. *BEA*, a picture book, was a finalist for the Katherine Paterson Prize for Children's Fiction, and *HOMER THE LITTLE STRAY CAT*, was named among the best of the indie presses for picture books. *RONIT AND JAMIL* is a 2018 Sydney Taylor notable book. She is the winner of the 2018 Leapfrog Fiction contest. She teaches graduate and undergraduate children's writing. Follow her: [twitter@RonitandJamil](https://twitter.com/RonitandJamil) and follow her blog: <http://PamelaLaskin.blogspot.com/>

Wildriana María de Jesús Paulino (Translator and artist. B. 1999, San Fraco. Macorís, Dominican Republic) From a very young age, Wildriana has shown a great interest in the arts and the procurement of knowledge itself. During the summer of 2016, Wildriana moved to the United States. Abroad, Wildriana had greater access to cultural and artistic centers and decided to engage in multiples programs. Some of these include participation in the Expanding the Walls program at the Studio Museum in Harlem, participation in the Saturday Program of the Cooper Union, internship at Wilmer Jennings Gallery at Kenkeleba House and her volunteer work at Word Up Bookshop. In 2018, Wildriana graduated from high school at the City College Academy of the arts. She is currently a fine arts student at the Cooper Union.

